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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006019

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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA DISPLEASED WITH KRG DRAFT CONSTITUTION

Classified By: Ambassador Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Senior Turkish officials have told us that the draft KRG constitution crosses several Turkish redlines, and asked us to intervene with the Iraqi Kurds. From a Turkish perspective, the draft seems almost designed to poke this country in the eye and will further complicate the GOT's engagement policy with Iraq, especially the Kurds. End summary.

12. (C) In separate meetings Oct. 13, MFA U/S Tuygan (with Ambassador) and GOT Iraq Special Envoy Celikkol (with DCM) blasted the draft KRG constitution and asked us to intervene with the Iraqi Kurds. In a separate meeting Oct. 16, PM/FM foreign policy adviser Davutoglu delivered the same message. Our interlocutors handed us a draft dated Aug. 22 they said was from the KRG's website (forwarded to EUR/SE). These officials highlighted the following issues:

-- The preamble refers to how the 1924 Treaty of Sevres gave Kurds a right to self-determination, later taken away by the 1927 Treaty of Lausanne, that effectively established the modern Republic of Turkey. Tuygan noted that any reference to Sevres will be seen as an affront to Turkey and its people and that if "our friends in Iraq refer to Sevres, it will be a wrong step." Davutoglu said that mention of Sevres for Turks means raising fundamental issues of war and peace.

-- In Article 2, Tuygan expressed Turkish concern about "expansionist tendencies" in the text. The draft states that, in addition to the three northern provinces, Iraqi Kurdistan includes Kirkuk Governorate; Aqra, Al-Shaykhan, Sinjar, Talafar, Tall Karf, Qarqush, Zammarr, Ba'shiqah, and Aski Kalak in Ninewah Governorate; Khanaqin and Mandali subdistricts in Diyala Governorate; and Badra and Jassan in Wasit Governorate. Davutoglu noted that the preamble also refers to "southern Kurdistan," begging the question of where the rest of Kurdistan may be located.

-- Tuygan also noted Article 8, which lays out the conditions under which the Iraqi Kurds could exercise their right to self-determination and secede from Iraq. Tuygan asserted that the text had been changed from previous drafts in a way that made it clear to Turkey that Iraq's future as a unified country had been given less emphasis, and demonstrates "an increased willingness to go forward with an independent state

at short notice." Tuygan predicted that both Sunnis and some Shia groups would have problems as well with this "dangerous tendency."

¶3. (C) Tuygan said various drafts have been circulated but he understood that this was the latest one. He was not sure what the timeline is for ratification. He said the GOT would raise these concerns with the Iraqis without going into too much detail, instead underlining general Turkish concerns on the status of Kirkuk and oil revenue issues. (PM Maliki was scheduled to visit Turkey Oct. 16-17, but his visit was postponed due to a sandstorm in Iraq grounding his aircraft.)

¶4. (C) Celikkol warned that Turkish patience with the KRG -- Barzani in particular -- is running out. He asserted that Turkey has reached out to the Iraqi Kurds repeatedly through large-scale investment, allowing direct flights from Kurdistan to Istanbul (and the ability for Iraqis to buy visas at the Turkish port of entry), and other measures. But Barzani interprets Turkish cooperation as weakness and continues to push for more. Celikkol told us that public opinion and resistance within the GOT have blocked him and the Turkish ambassador in Baghdad from meeting with Barzani and other KRG officials.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador and DCM undertook to relay Turkey's concerns to Washington. Ambassador noted the President's remarks early this month about Iraqi sovereignty, the need for the U.S. and Turkey to consult on Iraq issues, and the importance of Turkey taking up its concerns directly with the Iraqi authorities. He urged that Turkey do so in this case, as well.

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¶6. (C) Comment: Iraqi Kurdish approval of the Treaty of Sevres and denigration of the Lausanne Treaty -- in the preamble of the KRG constitution no less -- is bound to raise Turkish ire and suspicion. For Turks, Sevres was the instrument by which the World War I Allies vivisected the Ottoman Empire; Lausanne guaranteed the legitimacy of the nascent Turkish Republic and drew the country's current boundaries. Kurdish designs not only on Kirkuk but also on the predominantly Turkmen town of Talafar are an additional large bone of contention for Turkey. If this kind of language remains in the KRG constitution, it will create headaches for the GOT and further complicate already problematic relations.

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WILSON